

## **4.0 Relocation (Temporary)**

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## 4.1 Relocation Program

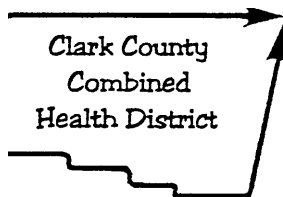
The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act (URA), 42 U.S.C. Section 4601, were enacted in 1971 to ensure uniform and equitable treatment of persons who may be displaced from their homes and businesses during federal programs, such as disaster relief or national emergencies, or as a result of projects involving acquisition of a private property. URA provides for the issuance of relocation benefits to persons displaced in such actions. U.S. EPA is authorized under Executive Order 12580, Superfund Implementation, to temporarily relocate the threatened individuals as part of the removal action. According to the URA, the U.S. EPA OSC determines the need for relocations that are carried out in conjunction with Superfund removal actions.

In time-critical mercury removal incidents, the OSC consults with public health personnel to determine whether relocation of residents is necessary, based on environmental sampling results and the health status of individuals who may be exposed. When available, local health department personnel play an important role in notifying residents of the need to relocate, helping secure local accommodations, and dealing with other local issues. Resources of local health departments vary greatly, which impacts their ability to participate in mercury responses. The American Red Cross (ARC) is often available to assist in relocation efforts and is sometimes able to fund temporary relocations and receive reimbursement from U.S. EPA when the removal is complete.

U.S. EPA or the local health department or another designated agency representative contacts the residents to inform them of the need to temporarily relocate. When possible, a local authority should issue a letter to notify the residents of sampling results and explain the relocation and clean-up process. A local health department letter is provided on the following page.

**NOTE: The OSC does not have the authority, even after explaining to the residents the consequences of mercury contamination, to relocate residents or dispose of their mercury-contaminated items.**

Under URA, residents who are temporarily relocated as part of a CERCLA removal action are eligible to receive reimbursement of all reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred as a result of the relocation. Each family is eligible to receive a housing allowance, which normally consists of paid lodging at a hotel. In addition, each family member is eligible to receive a daily per diem plus incidental benefits for miscellaneous expenses. Residents who relocate to friends' and families' homes are eligible to receive relocation incidental benefits of approximately \$2 per day per family member. When items cannot be decontaminated and must be disposed, residents may qualify for reimbursement. In past mercury responses, the ARC has provided benefits in the form of a check to the head of the household, and then once the project is completed, the U.S. EPA reimburses the ARC.



*Health Commissioner:*  
*Steven R. Wermuth, R.S., M.P.A.*

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***A Community Service Provider***

**Board of Health:**  
*Bonnie Bartos, RN, MS-President*  
*Ronald Spier, MD*  
*Rob Baker, PhD*  
*Rich Foster*  
*Harry Elliott*  
*Sheila Rice*  
*Darrell Kitchen*

March 7, 2000

To the residents of [REDACTED]:

We have received the air sampling results from the U.S. E.P.A. taken at your home. The results of the air sampling has shown mercury levels above the acceptable levels for a residential setting. Therefore, we are asking for your cooperation so that we may decontaminate your home.

You will be asked to leave your home for a period of approximately 1 days. You will be allowed to take enough clothing and personal items for this period. Anything you take must be screened by the U.S.E.P.A. to assure that you are not taking anything which might be contaminated with mercury.

The Red Cross will provide housing and a food allowance for those individuals who are being evacuated if needed. If you have other family members or friends that you wish to stay with during this time that is also acceptable. If you choose to stay with family or friends, the food allowance cannot be offered.

The Springfield Police Department will be notified and additional security checks will be performed during this time period. We will need a set of keys to gain access to your home for the decontamination process. The keys will be kept secure with the U.S.E.P.A.

In an effort to help you with the evacuation of your home, we will be giving you plastic bags to put clothing and any other items you wish to take with you. Please put those items in the bags and twist them shut. A representative from the U.S.E.P.A. will come by and check these bags with an instrument as you are leaving your home to assure you are not taking any mercury or mercury vapors with you. Please take any valuables, rings, jewelry, etc.

To briefly explain the decontamination process, a team professionals from the U.S.E.P.A. will perform an initial screening of your home by putting clothes into plastic bags and checking them with their equipment. Any clothing which has tested positive for mercury will be removed from the home. A list of anything removed will be given to you. When you go back into your home you will find your clothes in bags up off the floor.

*529 East Home Road, Springfield, Ohio 45503*  
*Phone: 937-390-5600 • Fax: 937-390-5625*

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Additionally, all flooring will be cleaned with a decontamination solution. This includes hardwood floors, tile floors, and carpeting. After all decontamination has been completed, post testing of the air will be performed to assure acceptable levels are met.

Once you are relocated, your contact will be with the Red Cross and our office. If you need anything, have any questions, or have any concerns do not hesitate to call the Red Cross or the Health Department. Our goal is to decontaminated your home and get you back in your home as quickly as possible. Your cooperation will helps us help you.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Wermuth, R.S., MPA  
Health Commissioner

cc: Steve Renninger - U.S.E.P.A.  
Viola Thorton - Red Cross  
File

## **4.2 Initial Screening of Residential Clothing Prior to Relocation**

Residents should be instructed to select all items they plan to take out of their home to use while they are temporarily relocated. Place these items in plastic bags, and allow them to sit for at least one hour. This time period will allow any mercury contamination on the clothes to fill the headspace of the bag. Screen the headspace of the bagged items using a mercury vapor analyzer (Photograph No. 4-1). A consistent reading greater than  $0.01 \text{ mg/m}^3$  (or  $10 \text{ }\mu\text{g/m}^3$ ) indicates that the items are contaminated. Because some of these items are essential, such as children's shoes, the ARC may issue a cash voucher for immediate replacement of essential items. These items should be documented in writing and with photographs and/or video. See Section 6.1 regarding Documentation Procedure for Contaminated Items.

**Photograph No. 4-1**



**View of START using a Jerome MVA to analyze the headspace of bags containing potentially mercury-contaminated clothes.**

### **4.3 Local Health Department “No Trespassing” Sign**

Many local health departments have the authority to condemn buildings or designate them “Unfit for Human Occupancy” due to health hazards. U.S. EPA does not have this authority and therefore should request that the local health department make this designation and place “No Trespassing” placards during clean-up of homes discovered to have mercury contamination (Photograph No. 4-2).

U.S. EPA may request local police support for extra security during the period of time residences are vacant for clean-up. U.S. EPA also may contract with private security companies to help prevent vandalism and burglary of vacant residential homes.

**Photograph No. 4-2**



**View of local health department “No Trespassing”  
sign on the back door of the house.**

### **4.4 Public Outreach Documents**

The following pages provide examples of documents from a previous mercury response distributed to local residents for informational purposes.

**For Immediate Release: April 30, 2000**

**Monroe County Health Department (MCHD)**

Health Contacts: Maureen Pfund, Solid  
Waste Coordinator  
Monroe County Health Dept.  
(734) 240-7677

Monroe County Medical Director Dr. Carl Schmidt, said today “ The preliminary results of sampling at the [REDACTED] school as found low levels of mercury contamination in several isolated areas. Several agencies and school officials are working rapidly but carefully to ensure a safe condition for the return of the students and faculty .”

On April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2000 a U.S. EPA Emergency Response Team and a Monroe County Health Department Official visited a house that had been contaminated after the owner’s child brought mercury home from school.

Representatives from EPA, [REDACTED] Officials, state and county health departments have been aggressively investigating the situation, taking advantage of the schools being closed for Easter vacation. As of April 28, 2000, thirty-four buses have been inspected for mercury vapors. Four buses have been found with small amounts of mercury. The school hired contractors to clean up the contamination on four buses. EPA and Health Officials are continuing to conduct air sampling and evaluating the results for the entire [REDACTED] School building.

Mercury is a naturally occurring metal that has several forms. Metallic mercury is a shiny, silver, odorless liquid metal, which if heated, it is a colorless, odorless gas. Mercury is a highly toxic, cumulative poison and a major health threat to humans. Exposure usually occurs by inhalation or by skin contact, but there is also a small risk of exposure through ingestion. Children living in or frequenting contaminated buildings are particularly at risk of exposure. At high levels, mercury may damage the brain, kidneys, and a developing fetus, according to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

The Monroe County Health Department is encouraging the public to dispose of properly any mercury they may have in their home. The Health Department will accept mercury by appointment and properly dispose of it free of charge, with no questions asked. Maureen Pfund, Monroe County Solid Coordinator said “ mercury poses a threat to human health and should never be kept in your home or garage.” Residents who may have mercury are encouraged to call the Monroe County Health Department at 734-240-7677 to make arrangements for free disposal.

The officials involved with this cleanup are concerned about the health risks to community members who may not even know they are being exposed to mercury in their homes or vehicles. The school says there will be no action taken against students who help take care of this unfortunate situation. “We don’t want to give out punishment, we want absolute safety to return to the [REDACTED] School.” said [REDACTED] Assistant Superintendent of [REDACTED] Schools.



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 5  
EMERGENCY RESPONSE BRANCH  
9311 GROH ROAD, ROOM 216  
GROSSE ILE, MI 48138-1697

REPLY TO ATTENTION OF:

NEWPORT MERCURY SPILL  
MAY 2000

Dear Resident,

As you may be aware, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) is in the process of decontaminating a home in Monroe County, Michigan, that has been contaminated with mercury. U.S. EPA would like to discuss with you the clean up that may take place in your home.

In April 2000, metallic mercury was taken from a middle school in Monroe County, Michigan, and was used in and outside of [REDACTED] School by a group of students. As a result, your home may also be contaminated with small amounts of mercury.

Representatives from U.S. EPA, [REDACTED] school officials, and state and county health departments have been aggressively investigating the situation, taking advantage of the schools being closed for Easter vacation. As of April 28, 2000, thirty-four buses have been inspected for mercury vapors. Three buses have been found with small amounts of mercury. The school hired contractors to clean up the contamination on the buses and with the school. U.S. EPA is conducting air sampling and are evaluating the results for the entire [REDACTED] School building and the buses.

The involved agencies screened and conducted air sampling at 2 homes. As of today, one home has been qualified for decontamination. Additional homes will be screened for mercury as they are identified.

Mercury is a naturally occurring metal that has several forms. Metallic mercury, also known as quick silver, is a shiny, silver, odorless liquid metal, which if heated, it is a colorless, odorless gas. Mercury is a highly toxic, cumulative poison and a major health threat to humans. Exposure usually occurs by inhalation or by skin contact, but there is also a small risk of exposure through ingestion. Children living in, or frequenting contaminated buildings are particularly at risk of exposure. At high levels, mercury may damage the brain, kidneys, and a developing fetus, according to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

Clean up of your home is expected to take approximately one week after work begins. Clean up may take longer time if mercury contamination levels are higher than

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expected, or if the mercury has spread to other areas of your home. The clean up team working in your home will work from about 7:00 am to 7:00 pm Monday through Saturday.

Every precaution is being taken to insure that public health and safety throughout the clean up is a priority. As you will see, the workers will be wearing protective clothing during the clean up project. U.S. EPA will be particularly careful in making sure your home is cleaned as safely and quickly as possible.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation on this matter. If you have any questions or concerns about this clean up action, please call Ginny Narsete at (312) 886-4359 or Maureen Pfund of the Monroe County Health Department at 734-240-7677.

Ginny Narsete,  
Public Affairs

# Mercury Incident Fact Sheet

Monroe County, Michigan

May 3, 2000



**Mercury Clean Up..Jefferson Middle School**

## Introduction

The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide information regarding the Jefferson School Mercury Incident. Also included, are phone numbers of the Jefferson School Offices, Monroe County Health Department and U.S. EPA representatives should the public have further health or environmental

concerns about the incident.

## History

On April 6<sup>th</sup>, a family notified the Monroe County Health Department about some mercury that their child brought home from school. Since this event, the Health Department and U.S. EPA have been aggressively working with the Jefferson School Officials, investigating the situation by interviewing students and residents to determine the extent of contamination. Additionally, the U.S. EPA provided air monitoring and took air samples for confirmatory analysis. The U.S. EPA also tested all 34 buses used by the Jefferson schools. Three buses have had levels of mercury that required a decontamination. Some mercury was detected in the school. Jefferson school officials hired an environmental contractor to decontaminate the buses and the school. The U.S. EPA is continuing to investigate and test all of

the schools in the Jefferson school district for mercury.

Mercury was detected in one home and it needs to be decontaminated.

## What is Mercury? And the Health Risks

Mercury is a naturally occurring metal that has several forms. Metallic mercury is a shiny, silver odorless liquid metal, which if heated, becomes a colorless and odorless gas. Mercury is a highly toxic, cumulative poison and a major health threat to humans. Exposure usually occurs by inhalation or by skin contact, but there is also a small risk of exposure through ingestion. Children living in or frequenting contaminated building are particularly at risk of exposure. At high levels, mercury may damage the brain, kidneys, and a developing fetus, according to the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry. The Monroe County Health Department is accepting mercury from residents who may have mercury stored in their home. The disposal is free and no questions will be asked about how the mercury was obtained.

## Current Status

As a result of mercury contamination, some items in the school have been disposed. They include lockers, vacuum cleaners and sink traps. Lab

data on air samples collected in the school building have shown that no mercury contamination remains. There is no human health or environmental threat. Three buses are currently being decontaminated.

## Next Steps

The Health Department will continue to encourage parents to report any incidences of mercury which they may have knowledge. The U.S. EPA will clean up the home that has elevated levels of mercury and will work with school and health officials and continue to offer assistance during the ongoing investigation.

### CONTACTS:

Jefferson Schools -Monroe County,  
Superintendent of Schools  
**Dr. Donna Schmidt Ed. D**  
**734-289-5598**

Monroe County Health Department -  
Environmental Health Division  
**Maureen Pfund, Hazardous Waste  
Coordinator, 734-240-7677**

Michigan Department of Community  
Health  
**Brendan Boyle**  
**1-517-335-8138**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
(EPA)  
**Ginny Narsete, Public Affairs**  
**1-800-621-8431 ext. 6-4359**  
**P.C. Lall, On Scene Coordinator**  
**734-692-7685**